

The Director of Central Intelligence  
Washington, D.C. 20505

DDI-03236-84

National Intelligence Council

31 May 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Intelligence

FROM:

A/NIO/LA

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SUBJECT: The Recent Soviet Armor Delivery to Nicaragua

1. The recent Soviet Bloc armor delivery to Nicaragua, which greatly expanded the Sandinista tank and APC inventory, raises questions about whether it represents a normal planned growth of the Nicaraguan Army or whether it is an accelerated buildup in anticipation of major hostilities within the next six months. The fact that a Cuban ship participated in the off-loading raises the possibility that the armor may even represent pre-positioning of weapons for possible Cuban use.

2. In assessing the above three alternatives, we need to watch the following developments.

- Whether the new armor is rapidly absorbed into the Sandinista inventory by being formed into a new unit with its own garrison and training schedule. This would argue in favor of a normal planned expansion.
- If the armor is not rapidly absorbed into a new unit, the possibility that it represents an accelerated buildup increases. So do the odds that it might represent pre-positioning for Cuban use.

3. In any case, the various collection components have been alerted, and the Intelligence Community will continue to focus closely on the problem.

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